

Email as delivered to full Board of Directors,
8:31 pm, Saturday, March 12, 2016

Original recipients:

Ntianu Alghanee <xxx@gmail.com>, Q Stroud <xxx@hotmail.com>,
Adriene Dilworth <xxx@yahoo.com>, Rajnikant Mehta <xxx@gmail.com>,
Jed Davis <xxx@gmail.com>, Sharon Mack <xxx@gmail.com>,
Debra Bonaparte <xxx@yahoo.com>, (and others)

Board Statement, potential for Criminality still very much present at Sevananda, and Resignation

At this time, and during the course of regular Board business, while in the performance of normal functions as Chair of the Policy Committee, with the added responsibility of all that implies with regards to potential violations of Sevananda ByLaws, Policy, and the like,

It has come to my attention over the past 10 months that this Board of Directors is compromised. From without, and from within.

That's a strong statement, but when I see "junior members" - store employees and former employees, for the most part - essentially hijacking all avenues toward restoration or normal function of this governing body, and then hijacking (or attempting to hijack) everything from simple votes to the "creation" of a board agenda that caters - most likely - to some of the very personalities responsible for this chaos and negligence?

Then I have to call it as I see it. And it's wrong, and it's happening, and some of it is still happening from WITHIN THE STORE, but frankly I feel it's being directed from without.

From a small clutch of "owner members" or potentially vendors, whom are, probably, of dubious utility and practicality to the long-term health of this Cooperative. And frankly, MOST of those I'm concerned about are - you guessed it - former employees of the Coop.

Who better than to know the inner workings of the store? And whom better, indeed (if an individual were so inclined) to know how to "game the system"...

Former GM Gary Hilliard may be gone, but the tradition (which existed PRIOR to GM Hilliard, btw) of subversion, turning a blind eye toward ethical (and perhaps criminal) lapses, and "shouldering out" anyone whom has the best interests of the Cooperative at heart - merrily (for some, perhaps) lives on, sad to say.

To all concerned:

**FEEL FREE TO SHARE THIS COMMUNICATION, FAR AND WIDE,
as I consider it to be a "public document".**

Why I Entered Board Service

I had a friend recommend me to run for the board last year. He PRACTICALLY had to lead me by the hand to pick up my packet. I reluctantly went through the motions - at first - and then during the process, I remembered what happened (in 2012, 2013), and why I was concerned in the first place, so I "took it on" as they say.

I felt I could make a difference. I was wrong. This current board, as compromised, is not "salvageable" in my opinion, and any REASONABLE attempt to reconfigure it will likely be met with sabotage, backbiting, infighting, and other forms of continued "pestilence" - as has HISTORICALLY been the course for this board, for several years now.

Though I believe there are STILL good people with good intentions serving on this current board, I no longer believe that they can, or will, ever prevail against what now appears to be the **constant onslaught** of what can only be described as "the Peanut Gallery". Basically, composed of that same "semi random" group of people whom want to "fashion" Sevananda toward their own ends - not out of any motive for service to the community, but "lip service" - for personal gain. As a CASH MACHINE, in some instances... wherein they may act as vendors, or else work for Sevananda's competitors while working for the store or "serving" (whom?) on the Board - without reporting the obvious conflict.

To anyone. Which is NOT just a violation of Policy, and a severe violation of Sevananda's Board's Code of ethics, but may be in essence "running a racket".

They wear their membership in this organization, or their past "service" (which frankly from a business and ethical standpoint, may have left much to be desired) as a "badge" to be worn around L5P, around the radio station and in certain circles where that equates to some sort of "high honor", like one should "puff one's chest out" because they serve on a board.

Well I haven't found it to be that way. Just the opposite in fact. And while I'm not ashamed of my service, or my record, I'm no fan of lost causes.

IMHO, the Potential for Criminality at Sevananda Still Exists

The final straw, for me, is when evidence of clear criminality is CLAIMED to exist... which is almost STRICTLY a matter for the full Board to discuss, in private, in Executive Session. AND YET, when this "supposed evidence" is "blurted out" in open session, and then AIMED AT THE SITTING BOARD in front of the presenter (as if any member of this Board had anything to do with embezzlement?), and then THAT BOARD MEMBER - whom CANNOT, by law, relinquish the role without resigning, SITS BACK DOWN AT OUR TABLE AFTER APPARENTLY IMPLICATING THIS ENTIRE BOARD IN A FINANCIAL CRIME.

Frankly, it's absurd, but it may also be illegal to do that.

She bore no evidence. She bore no witness. As a COLLEAGUE of the person whom uttered those statements, I can ASSURE YOU that in that regard ALONE - bearing evidence of criminal wrongdoing to this legal body - she has not fulfilled her fiduciary duty to this board.

And yet, not a word. That person still sits in that office. In fact, I think she got a round of applause from the gallery for hurling criminally tinged insults at her colleagues, if I remember correctly.

Now in practice, most people REGISN from a Board - ANY board - before leveling that amount of criticism at colleagues. Certainly, under law, that is a proper and PRUDENT, reasonable thing to do - and yet, Sevananda and it's members still tolerates this type of behavior - FROM ITS BOARD MEMBERS.

But then again, we may be speaking of people whom have no regard for Conflicts of Interest, may have personal interests in mind, and may be acting with flagrant disregard for policy, procedure, decorum, common sense and perhaps even the Law (as it exists in the State of Georgia).

Allow me to say, and I'm already on the record as saying, I WILL HAVE NO PART IN A LAWLESS BODY.

I have no desire to join the Gary Hiliard's of the world in awaiting whatever it is that may await him... NOT, mind you, that anyone has PROPERLY COME TO THIS BOARD (the full board, which is the "legal body" described in our charter documents) and reported any potential wrongdoings of his, while he sat as our GM at Sevananda. Not yet at any rate.

And most certainly, my COLLEAGUES have not, and that is a massive ethical lapse, but probably also a gross misuse of fiduciary responsibility, and perhaps a violation of OCGA.

And yet to hear certain "coop types" speak of this, "Sevananda can do whatever we want to do! We're a co-op!"

Coop "Status" in Law

Well, yes and no. I challenge anyone, any member of this Cooperative - at any time, anywhere - to name for me, EVEN ONE LAW of the US government, of the State of Georgia, of the County of Dekalb, of the City of Atlanta, or ANY of the various other districts in which we reside - sanitation, water, sewer, health, agriculture, etc etc - PLEASE, if you can think of EVEN ONE LAW that this Cooperative can UNILATERALLY (as solely by the actions of one or more of its members) IGNORE, without dire consequences?

Then please notify the Cooperative, and the appropriate municipality immediately. You'll find out VERY QUICKLY that ALL of Sevananda's rights, privileges, and its very existence, are AT THE LEAVE, and purely happen by the permission of, ALL OF THOSE VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS.

In short, THIS IS NOT "Sevanandastan".

We CANNOT create a "society" of freely associating, forward thinking individuals promoting good health, nutrition, and a balanced lifestyle AMONG CONSTANT DISRUPTION, NONSENSE, AND IN A CLIMATE OF "LA LA I DON'T WANT TO HEAR YOU" PERMISSIVENESS TOWARD LAWLESSNESS AND UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR.

That just simply is no longer possible. Therefore, I hereby resign from this Board of Directors, effective immediately.

Note to former colleagues:

No "vote" is necessary. Do not argue my decision. Do not attempt to replace me, for my skill set is unique and very specific, and I will still carry out that role if necessary. But by all means, DO NOT attempt to "reinstate me", for I will be your worst nightmare if you do, and you (specific to "if the shoe fits") already know exactly why.

I am no longer in this for fun and games. And now I'm no longer in it at all, except as my conscience guides.

Where I have suspected "lawlessness" before, I now see what I believe to be clear evidence of that type of behavior. Within the Board of Directors, and likely coming from a very small group within and without, whom are very well "couched" in their actions, perhaps to the point where they don't even need "coordination" of those actions any more - and yet I see evidence of that coordination right before me, right now.

Complete disregard for process, policy, progress, the push for any "restorative efforts" at TRUE ACCOUNTABILITY whatsoever, disregard for the VERY REAL business and legal matters of the cooperative store - all in the name of some unspoken unknown agenda/s.

Not to mention apparent disregard for law - assuming they think or feel can get away with it.

How Does This Affect the Coop Store?

Well, that type of reputation, and attitude, HURTS BUSINESS. And people know. And I've heard the comments from colleagues of mine BEYOND the confines of Sevananda, about Sevananda's "shady reputation", how many members just lapsed because they couldn't, in good conscience, return to the store, how some left and will never come back.

Well allow me to let you in on a little secret: Gary Hilliard did not cause that.

That's right, I've said it aloud. Our recent GM did not cause that climate of - well, whatever it was. He did, however, inherit that, as did this CURRENT Board whom, despite all best efforts by a few dedicated people, I now believe are doomed to failure.

And frankly, when Sevananda's owner-members make up about TWENTY PERCENT OF THE STORE'S BUSINESS - and then, comprise the very "small groups" that from time to time try to "hijack the coop" from within (though usually from the Board)?? Well, forget it. The cancer's probably gone to deep. The patient barely has a pulse. Removing the disease will likely kill the patient. The patient is on life support.

IT IS TIME TO SAY "GOODBYE" TO SEVANANDA, AS WE KNEW IT.

That's right, my humble opinion from an insider's perspective is that the BOARD - essentially, the governance of the Coop - it is on limited time. Life support. The cancer continues.

IT'S TIME FOR ALL GOOD MEN AND WOMEN TO STAND UP AND BE COUNTED.

When this day began, when the sun first shone over my head today, I was officially Chair of the Election Committee. Because NO ONE ELSE WANTED TO DO IT.

Now mind you, I have fellow "members" on this committee whom have yet to do one CONSTRUCTIVE thing, for or toward elections - they're too busy infighting, too busy arguing, too busy trying to put forward OUT OF ORDER motions, too busy trying to screw up, and gum, and muck up the process, in ANY POSSIBLE WAY.

That's right, it's ALREADY HAPPENING AGAIN. And I'm out - I want no part of that potential legal liability.

BOYCOTT THIS "ELECTION PROCESS"

I AM DEFINITELY NOT ASKING ANYONE TO "NOT SHOP" AT SEVANANDA - BY ALL MEANS, CONTINUE TO SHOP AT SEVANANDA.

But that's beside the point - because frankly, since I am no longer a member of this board, I'M CALLING FOR A BOYCOTT OF THESE ELECTIONS.

Yes, as far as "elections" are concerned, DO contemplate a total boycott:

Don't run, or "withdraw" your candidacy while you still can.

Don't vote.

Don't participate in something you will VERY LIKELY regret, later. You don't need the headache, or the heartache, or the legal liability -

Because that's exactly what the Board is - **a legally responsible Board of Governance**. And frankly, I've personally witnessed complete disregard for that responsibility, on the part of several of my fellow colleagues, while they appear to be in pursuit of "their dreams" - or something, but whatever it is, it is NOT serving this Cooperative. It's KILLING IT, imho, as surely as a parasitic vine grows around the trunk and limbs of a beautiful fruit tree: Left untended, it will soon choke the life out of that tree.

No more shade. No more fruit. No more leaves to rake up. Just a dead husk, with a parasitic vine wrapped around it, sucking the last drops of sap from the wretched body of it's host. Your only hope at that point is to chop down the husk, mulch what's left, and PLANT SOMETHING WORTH PLANTING.

But as for a dysfunctional "legal body" running the store, as being compromised FROM WITHIN AND WITHOUT OF THE BOARD?? You honestly do not want to be part of that.

That's not "good seed" - it doesn't even qualify as "manure" in my book.

Motivations

While I regret having to make this decision, I do not regret my time serving on the Board - my friend was right. He probably KNEW when he recruited me, that there wasn't really anything anyone could do, to save the husk-remnant of something he once so loved. He probably KNEW, that the Board (at that time, and previous Board compositions) was already so heavily compromised from within, that no effort could surmount the constant onslaught of usurpations. He probably KNEW that he was sending me into the front lines - unprepared, ill-defined, without any ammunition, without being warned ahead of time - and he did so anyway.

Well I'm just going to have to forgive him for all of that. You see, Ian passed away last January, quietly, at his home, with his partner by his side. Which is exactly all he wanted out of life at this point, and so that was probably the very best thing for him, as I can tell.

So yes, he sent me there, into the lion's MOUTH (not just the den, because that would've been easy), right into the Heart of Darkness, wherein SIGNIFICANT and HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE loyalties dwell... because, I feel, HE WANTED A WITNESS. And because he thought - no, he knew - that I was probably the one person who would not shrink from that task, even if I was never told what the task was, at any time.

Sevananda needed a witness. And it still does. And I will not shrink from that duty. After 10 months of effort, it has become CRYSTAL CLEAR to me that I cannot effect any change from the Board, whatsoever, it is already THAT heavily conflicted and compromised - and so this communication becomes necessary.

Board Motions Being Used as a Smoke Screen?

I'm tired of lies. I'm tired of "molly coddling" some of the very people who may be responsible - figuratively and materially - for this most recent disaster with our GM. I have YET to see any evidence, produced, that this GM has "robbed the store" as people are trying to say, loudly and for all to hear, without evidence. And so, if the current audit (conducted at a cost of nearly \$15K to this ownership, without any proof of its necessity, and this immediately after a positive 2014 Audit) does in fact prove some kind of significant loss, then I hope the "audit trail" doesn't stop with the former GM... because historically, IT DID NOT BEGIN THERE.

And I dare anyone to prove that it did. All we need to do to determine who MAY be responsible is to go back in time a few months, and audit 2012 or 2013 - and we'd be very likely to detect some serious deficiencies - oh, BUT WAIT!

"WE JUST SPENT THAT MONEY ON A 2015 AUDIT!!! We can't afford to do that!"

And the loudest voices calling for that expensive, perhaps (at this point) unnecessary pre-forensic 2015 audit, imho, may likely come from the same quarters as those who could have much to hide from a 2012 / 2013 audit, which is PRECISELY when this Coop was almost wiped from the face of the Earth, by their actions.

ARE YOU BEGINNING TO SEE HOW THIS WORKS?

As I understand it (and I am open to correction, any attorneys in the audience?), **the statute of limitations is running out for financial crimes committed in 2012. For 2013, the statute of limitations runs out NEXT YEAR.** And personally, I believe that if a CERTAIN CROWD, can continue to keep PUSHING A CERTAIN AGENDA, and thus "get away" with blaming a CERTAIN PERSON whom is no longer at this Coop, well -

then Sevananda will remain "just on the brink" financially, PERPETUALLY, and then no audit of any of the real potential wrongdoings will be had. Gone With The Wind. Swept Under the Rug.

And if that happens, the criminals will get away, Scott free, and LAUGHING all the way to the bank. And frankly, they may still be among us, as "respected members" of this Coop community.

Well crap to that, I say.

What last GM did NOT Do

Gary Hilliard, for all his faults, did NOT nearly wipe this Coop off the face of the planet. Instead, as best I can tell, he helped "pull it from the brink" of complete financial ruin.

Now frankly, the jury's still out on this count, but our 2015 audit should be ready shortly. And frankly, I would like very much for the contents of that audit (as much as can be shared publicly) to be made available as soon as possible, in a public way. And if that happens, well... I don't know. This Board has already clearly shown how compromised, dysfunctional and UNABLE it is, to me - so I wouldn't expect much action in any case, regardless of ANY results from this 2015 audit report.

And that may have been the plan: Lot of talk, lots of going around in circles, spend a huge chunk of money (while we're still paying off debt, successfully) - but in essence, very little action, and making NEARLY CERTAIN that the EVENTS WHICH ALMOST LED TO COMPLETE COLLAPSE remain "uninvestigated".

But hey, that couldn't be "politically motivated" now, could it.

Anything We Can Do? ** (see also ADDENDUM, end of letter)

Please allow me to reiterate:

A. If I were currently running for election, I would decline nomination for Sevananda's Board of Directors, when that happens or sooner.

B. If I were thinking about voting, I would not vote.

C. If I were thinking that the current Board of Directors is going to "get to the bottom" of anything - I would lose that illusion in the most expedient way, since all of those that try are neutralized, silenced, or frustrated out of existence.

The rot is too deep. The plot is too thick. Those responsible are going to breathe a big sigh of relief - AS LONG AS THEY CAN PIN THEIR PROBLEMS ON A "ROGUE GM", imho.

So yes, you have been duped. And so have I, but no longer.

Here's what I would do instead:

1. ASK FOR THE RESIGNATIONS OF THE ENTIRE BOARD, as it stands.

Good apples, bad apples, no apples - the entire lot. Clean Sweep.

2. FIND OUT HOW THE CO-OP CAN RUN WITHOUT A BOARD, EVEN IF ONLY TEMPORARILY.

This is possible, Sevananda does have a Registered Business Agent, and a functioning interim GM team at present. IMHO, these two things may be all we have going for us now, as a registered Coop. (And make no mistake, the interim GM team, as currently constituted, has my full support).

3. INSTITUTE AN IMMEDIATE AND PERMANENT BAN PREVENTING ANY AND ALL "FORMER" BOARD MEMBERS from running for Sevananda Board of Directors, again.

Once a Director quits, allows their term to lapse, resigns, is procedurally removed from the Board, whatever - that's it. Nada: "Thank you for your service! Now if you'll excuse us, we have work to do." THIS ONE ACTION can help prevent the revolving door - and the cyclic "delinquency" which unfortunately seems to plague this institution, at present.

4. TERM LIMITS.

Two terms maximum, 6 years total maximum, in any combination. Whether appointed or voted into office. AND: When a term is up? THE OFFICER LEAVES, if they were not re-elected... no "lame ducks", no malingerers, no misuse of lax policy guidelines, etc. But LEAVES, as in:

"Well, you don't have to go home, but you can't stay here; And thank you for your service!"

And last but not least, one of my favoritist topics in the whole wide world:

5. SEVERELY RESTRICT "employee" Board membership, if it is to be allowed AT ALL IN A MEMBER COOP.

This topic is so important, and so urgent, that it probably merits an entire, separate email all by itself - but here goes...

Right now, we have 3 employee members - yet as of my 10 months in service, two have not produced a single written (public) record of any work performed, which in some circles is considered "non-performance", while the third CONSTANTLY argues with me on Policy matters, to the point where I'm receiving texts - on a Saturday night, WHILE AT WORK, and I'm needing to expend my entire lunch hour returning texts, about a matter which was ALREADY DISCUSSED, and frankly decided in no small part by the complaining member (whom claims "not to remember"?). Now that barrage of nonsense only stopped RECENTLY, when out attorney (unbeknownst to me) clarified the matter for those pushing the issue, and (remarkably) his opinion stopped the nonsense.

His opinion, however, costs this Cooperative in the form of attorney's fees. Mine however, which was no different in ANY substantial way - and in fact, just as nuanced and covered more details of the item in question - as stated NUMEROUS times in numerous instances to numerous EMPLOYEE Board members, whom CONTINUED COMPLAINING - didn't cost owner members one extra penny.

Yet that wasn't good enough with them, even though in my working life, I've been dealing with substantial legal matters for several decades now, and am (apparently) pretty well versed in some of these.

But the issue didn't change, and the facts didn't change, and the people involved didn't change. And they don't stop - they just keep asking the same questions over and over, obfuscating, obstructing, gerrymandering (if that were possible), arguing, becoming "offended" (when that is convenient), etc.

The issue? "How does Sevananda define 'employee' for purposes of its Board of Directors?"

Now ANY Board has the right to do that. And WE (us, and the Board members criticizing), all of us, did just that at the December meeting, by consensus. So, what's all the ruckus about?

Indeed, "employee Board members", allow me to ask again: WHAT IS ALL THE RUCKUS ABOUT?

But the problems with employee Board members are just beginning.

For example: Employees have MAJOR ADVANTAGES over anyone else running for the board - and frankly, even if they don't do anything of substance, they can receive:

1. An extra check, untaxed "stipend", for showing up at meeting, once a month.
2. "Recognition" or status from their peers and fellow employees.
3. They exact NONE of the legal risks that non-employee Board members face (due to State laws barring employees from any managerial responsibility).

Now some Coop die-hards will argue that this last point isn't true, but - if ever tested, State of Georgia Code will override any "puny policy" that Sevananda has, or could ever have, or could ever enact... and "employees" would not be held responsible. So I ask you, who is correct: Coop "die hards", employees, or Federal and State employee indemnity laws?

**And there you have it:
"SEPARATE BUT UNEQUAL"**

In my 10 month experience with this board, non-employee Board members (whom ALSO have work, home and social lives to tend to) are "shoveled" the lion's share of work, while employee members "hammer away" at their own personal agendas, their own "pet issues", whatever those may be. I won't labor the point except to say that it's entirely dysfunctional, and does not serve this body, or the Cooperative, in any meaningful way at all.

BUT... that pales to having employee Board members at Sevananda acting as VOTING Board members.

IMHO, that practice is COMPLETELY, INHERENTLY dysfunctional. As ADVISORS, perhaps, but as bearing no legal responsibility to the Coop for their advice? In that instance it would still remain QUESTIONABLE.

Now if that strikes you as the least bit "counter-intuitive", then how about **EMPLOYEES "RUNNING" (actually, "WORKING") AS CANDIDATES FOR THE BOARD?**

Sound like a Conflict of Interest to you? When you can walk in to the store on any give day, and see them, because THEY'RE REQUIRED TO BE THERE BY THEIR WORK SCHEDULES, AND THEY'RE BEING PAID TO WORK?

That's an unconscionable advantage in an election process, and yet nobody wants to talk about it.

IT'S A LOT LIKE HILLARY CLINTON IS STANDING INSIDE THE POLLING PLACE, AND SHE WORKS AT THE POLLING PLACE, AND SHE'S RUNNING FOR OFFICE, AND HER PICTURE IS POSTED PROMINENTLY IN THE STORE (POLLING PLACE), AND SHE'S THERE IN FRONT OF YOU WHILE YOU PICK UP YOUR BALLOT TO VOTE - and then you see her face on the ballot, and say "Ah hah! I recognize that face!" to yourself, and then you vote.

For the people you recognize, but for everyone else - "Meh".

And yes, it's a disruptive MISUSE of the election process, and I'm certain more than one Board member in the past has been elected not on merits, or qualifications, or acumen or skills set, or even basic aptitude - but purely on facial recognition.

In fact I'm sure of it. I'm also pretty sure I've also served with some of those.

Which honestly is not to demean employee service to this organization. Without employees, there is no Coop, and that should go without saying, so please don't attempt to put words in my mouth. Employees are not "volunteers" - they're paid to do a job, EXPECTED to do that job, and then the store functions smoothly - but it is a HUGE, and completely UNEXAMINED conflict of interest, to have an EMPLOYEE of a GM, sitting on the SAME BOARD, as being "MORE EQUAL" than the General Manager (GM) who runs that store - specifically because,

WHILE REQUIRED TO ATTEND BOARD MEETINGS, THE GM CANNOT "VOTE". But...

But hey, here at Sevaanda, we think it's fine to say their "employees" CAN vote.

Vote. On decisions directly affecting the GM's ABILITY TO MANAGE THE STORE OPERATION, which is VITAL to this Cooperative, without which IT CANNOT AND WILL NOT SURVIVE. When the GM is hired SPECIFICALLY for that skillset, to manage and operate every facet of a fully functioning, forward facing, public organic vegetarian store - and we all know that as "Sevananda".

Is the "dysfunctionality" of allowing employee Board members getting through to you now? Are you beginning to see it? AND YET, we have PAID ADVISORS (I won't mention any names), who are firms that charge us quite a bit of money over time, and apparently they think this is a SPLENDID IDEA to have **employee Board members voting ON THEIR BOSS'S MATTERS!!** "Can't have enough of it" seems like their opinion, imho, and so the

nonsense continues...

In a NON-EMPLOYEE OWNED COOPERATIVE, which defines Sevananda, since we are "MEMBER OWNED" (some 3,000 plus is the last number I heard), that is pure drivel and nonsense.

And yet in either instance, you hire a GM to run the store , which proves that the very notion is nonsense - but certainly in the case where "owners" are such a diverse (and generally "absent") group as happens with this Cooperative.

It's the Elephant in the room, and it's huge. And it need to be "fixed". And that needs to happen very soon, because IMHO, ["employee Board membership" remains the SINGLE MOST DIRECT PATH for anyone whom wants to push any sort of "private agenda" from within Sevananda's Board of Directors.](#)

And the easiest remedy all of these problems, is simply for Sevananda to bar employee Board members. And to bar FORMER EMPLOYEES, for a period of 5 years, from ever serving in any such capacity.

OWNER MEMBERS gone "off the range"

Now this is where it gets "sticky". You see, Sevnanda is an Cooperative Association made up of freely associating members of our "Community" (or "society"). We CHOOSE to be members in association - and yet, I am now FIRMLY convinced that certain among us believe that THEIR INTERESTS, AND THEIR INTEREST ONLY are what's best for the entire Cooperative.

All 3,000-plus members.

Sound a little "off" to you? Well that just means you haven't yet experienced that as it's directed at you from members of the gallery, in an open meeting.

"Not so fast, yo" is what I want to say, and yet decorum and manners prevents me from doing so, though I have called out certain offenses. To no avail.

You may not believe this, but I ACTUALLY had a fellow Board member say to me, during a meeting where expletives and epithets were FLYING around the room FROM THE GALLERY - that she "didn't care" if underage children might be exposed to such nonsense, such unethical, such immature and non-adult behavior.

I almost vomited in my closed mouth. She can identify herself if she likes, but I'll leave it there for now. Suffice to say, municipalities have a FAR different view of those kinds of untoward activities, as affecting minors in a public setting, than this person has. As did my grandmother, whom might've seen fit to give this woman a piece of her mind, had she been present at that meeting instead of me.

But I digress.

IMHO, this board is finished. It's done all it could do - which is, sorry to say, almost nothing. It is never going to be ALLOWED to do anything, either, and that is BY DESIGN, and the machinations of a very few people whom seem to be trying to wrestle the entire Cooperative out from under the remaining 3,000 or so of us.

We can stand by and let that happen, or we can do something.

Do something.

Don't run.

Don't vote.

Ask for IMMEDIATE resignations, of all Board members, as presently "serving" (some whom are apparently only serving their own interests).

DO NOT "replace" this Board with ANYONE whom is begging for the job.

WORK WITH our Coop Consultants to see what can be done, about finding a Board that is not so heavily "infused" with corruption and insider nonsense.

And LAST BUT NOT LEAST, KEEP SHOPPING! Without the sales, this Coop won't exist any more.

I AM DEFINITELY NOT ASKING ANYONE TO "NOT SHOP" AT SEVANANDA - BY ALL MEANS, CONTINUE TO SHOP AT SEVANANDA.

Because at the moment, that is one of the FEW real powers we have. Without customers, there will be no Coop.

I hope this doesn't land on deaf ears. Best to all, let's see what's possible, let's see if perhaps there is still any "good seed" left in this endeavor... and if we're wrong, if there is not, then what will happen was going to happen any way.

Peace, good will, and best to all - but most of all, do not "give up" without trying, for that would constitute a true travesty.

Tim ODonnell
Former Board member,
Sevananda Cooperative
Former Chair, Policy Committee
Former Chair, Election Committee

Resigned as of this day, March 12, 2016, effective immediately.

**ADDENDUM – additional terms and action items, sent 3-13-2016:
What ELSE can you do? The following - help enact these:\

6. BAN VENDORS FROM HOLDING ANY POSITION ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

If you want to "stop the rot" dead in its tracks, then aside from merely banning employee Board members, you will ALSO need a complete ban on any "opportunity" for VENDOR Board membership. Not merely exclusive, this ban should ALSO EXTEND to:

- Relatives (immediate or by marriage)
- Employees, or even "distributors" of Vendor products
- Those (anyone) having a significant financial "stake" in a Vendor, Vendor distribution, or Vendor operation

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It is improper of the HIGHEST ORDER that anyone sitting on THIS Board of Directors would maintain, in any way, a FOR-PROFIT VENDOR RELATIONSHIP and maintain Board power and influence over the organization, AT THE SAME TIME. Undue influence, bordering on fraud and racketeering.\

7. EXTEND THAT "VENDOR BAN" FOR 5 YEARS PAST END OF VENDOR RELATIONSHIP.

AFTER the person/s have ceased Vendor relationship with Sevananda, a 5 year "moratorium" on that person/persons as being considered for any Board position WHATSOEVER – assuming Vendor relationship is not reactivated in any way during that period, or during Term of Service with the Board (requiring immediate resignation, in the latter instance). This is in line with, and EXACTLY as should be required, per employees since BOTH of these positions with the Coop appear to have the greatest POTENTIAL for exertion of "undue influence", pursuit of personal agendas, for-profit "dealings" with the Coop, and even potential for criminal activity.

8. BAN ALL HOLDING OR MAINTAINING ANY "COMPETITOR RELATIONSHIP" FROM BOARD PARTICIPATION.

For OBVIOUS reasons, this would include:

- Employees, contractors, signed or agreed agents of, etc
- Relatives of the same
- Anyone with a significant financial "stake" in a Competitor's business (investors, partners)\

One hears and sees MANY THINGS from within a Board Director's position. Unless of course one would DESIRE that a "competitor" would know every small detail of a business's strengths, vulnerabilities, and weaknesses, then this measure is just COMMON SENSE. \

9. FIVE YEAR MORATORIUM, BOARD PARTICIPATION, THOSE IN COMPETITOR STANCE.

This of course would assume that the person can adequately document that they have "left" that "competitor" position, and no longer profit from or serve on any competing agency with any competitor. Again, COMMON SENSE.

COMPENSATIVE CONSIDERATION for these concessions:

None of the above restrictions would, of course, apply to "employees, contractors, subcontractors, assigns, paid advisors," etc. as being held in the transparent, above-board forms of doing honest and or "necessary business" with this Cooperative - it's just that none of these people can hold a seat on the Board of Directors, or a position in the same.

And that's what this is all about, isn't it: Simply requiring that everyone herein conduct HONEST BUSINESS ONLY within this Cooperative. \

Rationale \

Frankly, it's all but impossible to keep DISHONEST persons, whom are intent upon deception, from applying for, running for, or even attaining office with this Board of Directors. AND YET, having these "safeguards" in place, in the form of NEW AND CLEARLY STATED BOARD POLICY for Sevananda, would IMHO be a MAJOR STEP in "getting to the rot" of personal interests, petty annoyance, theft, potential graft, extortion, and even potential for blackmail, OUT OF THIS STORE, by merely DISALLOWING THAT TYPE OF BEHAVIOR IN THE BOARDROOM.

If anyone is wondering, the reason I am proffering these points is that, during my (very short, but intense) 10 month term with this Cooperative Board, I have personally heard stories / encountered anecdotal evidence / seen what could be "reaonsable examples" of EVERYTHING I MENTION IN THIS LETTER. WITHOUT EXCEPTION.

AND YET STILL, NO ONE WILL "COME FORWARD" WITH A FORMAL COMPLAINT. \

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That cultivates a general culture of guilt, victim worship, and abuse survival that quite frankly, if left unchecked, will destroy this Cooperative, as in:

"R.I.P., Sevananda. So sorry to see you go. Perhaps we should've DONE SOMETHING WHILE WE COULD HAVE."

Tim ODonnell

ACTION ITEMS

Call Sevananda and let them know how you feel about potential for misconduct remaining in the store:

Sevananda Main Telephone: 404-681-2831

Board Liaison's office: extention 115, plus "#" key

(Board Liason is a compensated position, so make sure she takes your calls, and keep record of it)

Email, and letter contact: \

Sadly, I have heard accounts of letters which were sent, and NOT received by intended recipients, as per using the Store address, BUT ALSO "comments and suggestions" left at Customer Service. \

FOR THIS REASON, I do NOT recommend "mailing" directly to the store, nor even sending "email". \

INSTEAD, I would MAKE MY WAY to a Board Meeting, and deliver the letter in PERSON, or else \

SIGN UP TO SPEAK. Sevananda's Board of Directors meets the third Tuesday of every month, and \ begins 6:15pm, held in the downstairs meeting room.